

R E P O R T

OF THE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE TOWN OF CANTON,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING APRIL, 1851.

DISTRICT, No. 1.—SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee,—John Blackmon.

Teacher,—Miss Maria Tucker.

Length of School, five and a half months ; wages of Teacher, per month, \$12 ; amount received by Teacher as pay, \$66 ; average attendance of Scholars, 41 67-112 ; whole number of Scholars, 56 ; number of Scholars under five years of age, 6 ; number over fifteen years of age, 1.

The instructress of this School has had no experience as a Teacher, this being her first school, yet she exhibited, in a very few days, unmistakeable evidences of fitness for her new vocation. Good order was generally maintained, and a wholesome discipline mildly, yet firmly enforced. At the closing examination of the School, the classes recited with a good degree of decision and animation, showing that they had profited by the excellent methods of teaching to which they had been subjected.

WINTER TERM.

Length of School, four months and four days ; wages of Teacher, per month, \$17 ; amount received by the Teacher as pay, \$70.83 $\frac{1}{3}$; average attendance of Scholars, 34 4-7 ; whole number of Scholars, 52 ; number of Scholars under five years of age, 1 ; number of Scholars over fifteen years of age, 6. Same teacher as in summer.

Miss Tucker did not disappoint the expectations which had been raised by her success in the summer school. The District would do well to secure her services as long as possible.

DISTRICT, No 2.—SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee,—William H. Peterson.

Teacher,—Miss Almira Tucker.

Length of School, four months; average attendance of Scholars, 34 11-20; whole number of Scholars, 42; number of Scholars under five years of age, 5; number over fifteen years of age, 2.

The Teacher of this School was, in many respects, admirably qualified for the duties of her profession; yet there was an evident defect in her mode of government, this was discoverable in the hissing and humming noise which constantly filled the school-room. It seemed that the teacher had become so accustomed to this noise, that it was in a great degree unnoticed by her; but was a source of great annoyance to the Committee, when visiting the School. There was, also, too much prompting of the scholars, during recitation, by each other, and by the teacher. Scholars, during recitation, should be thrown much upon their own resources,—if they have prepared their lesson, there is no need of prompting; if they have not prepared their lessons, to prompt them is only to encourage them in idleness.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher,—Mr. Albert Dickerman.

Length of School, three months; wages of Teacher, per month, \$33; amount received by Teacher as pay, \$24; average attendance of Scholars, 48 4-33; whole number of Scholars, 52; number of Scholars under five years of age, 1; number over fifteen years of age, 13.

Mr. Dickerman gave promise of future usefulness as a teacher; he is yet young, and many of his scholars being large, he partially failed in acquiring that government over the school necessary to, and, indeed, indispensable to perfect success. The School, however, made very good improvement, and the Committee are of the opinion that, with the experience already acquired, Mr. Dickerman will meet with good success as a teacher.

DISTRICT, No. 3, PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.—SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee,—Mr. V. A. Messinger.

Teacher,—Miss S. C. Messinger.

Length of School, six months; wages of Teacher, per month, \$16; average of attendance, 75; whole number of

Scholars, 123; number of Scholars under five years of age, 14; number of Scholars over fifteen years of age, none.

The Teacher of this School has shown herself thoroughly qualified, in every respect, for her station. Although her school is large enough for two or three, she has been enabled, by a tact and talent very rare among teachers, to preserve almost perfect order; the scholars have made excellent proficiency. When a school is as much too large, as this one is, it is utterly impossible that the children should progress as rapidly as they otherwise might. In discipline there was exhibited a happy mingling of mildness, firmness and dignity. The Committee are sorry to say, that, at the closing examination of the School, very few of the parents of the children were present.

WINTER TERM.

Same teacher as in the summer. Length of School, three months and three weeks; wages of Teacher, per month, \$16; amount received by Teacher as pay, \$60; average attendance of Scholars, 70; whole number of Scholars, 95; number of Scholars under five years of age, 9; number over fifteen years of age, none.

This School was attended with the same excellent success as in the summer.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT.—SUMMER TERM.

Teacher,—Miss Mary S. Messinger.

Length of School, six months; wages of Teacher, per month, \$21.15 $\frac{1}{2}$; amount received as pay, \$126.92; average attendance of Scholars, 68; whole number of Scholars, 78.

The reputation of the Teacher of this School has been for some time well established. Her method of teaching is characterized by clearness and thoroughness; she displays an excellent knowledge of the first principles of the different studies pursued by her pupils, and a happy facility in imparting that knowledge. Her discipline is strict, and enforced with decision and energy: the School, as might be expected from the admirable system of instruction to which it has been subjected, has made rapid and thorough progress.

WINTER TERM.

Same Teacher as in summer. Length of School, three months and three weeks; wages of Teacher, per month, \$21.15 $\frac{1}{2}$; amount received by Teacher as pay, \$79.30; average of attendance of Scholars, 64; whole number, 75.

The instructress being indisposed, there was no closing examination of this School. The Committee, have, however, visited the School during the term, and are pleased to be able to say, that the Teacher displayed the same intimate acquaintance with her duties as formerly, and the same disposition to discharge them to the fullest extent.

DISTRICT, No. 4.—SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee,—Hiram Jones.

Teacher,—Miss Mary J. Dickerman.

Length of School, four months; wages of Teacher, per month, \$16; amount received by the Teacher as pay, \$64; average attendance of Scholars, 14; whole number, 23.

This School being a very small one, it might be supposed that the children would progress very rapidly; but a school may be too small as well as too large. When a school is so very small, there is not that interest among the scholars which exists in larger schools. Why this is so, we can hardly tell. We know that there is not the same degree of interest in a small congregation of worshippers as in a large one; yet we can hardly give a reason for it. Miss Dickerman evidently felt that there was not sufficient life among her scholars, and seemed unable to create it. Why this School should be so small, the Committee cannot tell, as there are scholars enough in the District to constitute a very respectable school. Some of the scholars exhibited a good deal of skill in drawing, especially in drawing of maps.

WINTER TERM.

Length of School, four months; wages of Teacher, per month, \$20; amount received as pay, \$80; average attendance of Scholars, 11; whole number, 20. Teacher, same as in summer.

DISTRICT, No. 5.—SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee,—Mr. Gill.

Teacher,—Miss Clara Tucker.

Length of School, four months and one week; wages of Teacher, per month, \$16; average attendance of Scholars, 34; whole number, 46; number of Scholars under five years of age, 2; number over fifteen years of age, 2.

The success attending this School was not so great as the Committee could have desired. There was a lack of that energy, so requisite to the success of a school. At the closing examination, the Committee felt compelled, by a sense of

duty, to speak plainly to some of the scholars with regard to the necessity of exhibiting more animation. Some of the scholars, while reciting, looked as though they would drop to pieces, not having energy enough to hold themselves up straight. This is a more grievous evil than many Teachers are aware of, for it is impossible that a child should progress rapidly in its studies while wanting in physical energy. In the present instance, the teacher was not wholly free from the faults of some of her scholars.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher,—Miss Louisa Tucker.

Length of School four months; wages of Teacher, per month, \$16; average attendance of Scholars, 36 43-79; whole number, 43; number of Scholars under five years of age, 2; number over fifteen years of age, 1.

This School has evidently improved much under the administration of the Teacher of this term; although this was her first attempt at teaching, Miss Tucker has succeeded very well indeed. This district has passed a vote to build a new school-house, — a thing very much needed.

DISTRICT, No. 6.—SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee,—Elisha White.

Teacher,—Miss Maria Crane.

Length of School, five months; wages of Teacher, per month, \$18; amount received as pay, \$90; average attendance of Scholars, 41 67-100; whole number, 70; number of Scholars under five years of age, 2; number over fifteen years of age, none.

At the close of this term, the scholars gave evidence of having been subjected to a thorough and an excellent system of teaching and government; the Teacher possesses undoubted literary qualifications for her profession. This School is called a backward one, and one difficult to govern; and the Committee are of the opinion, that Miss C. would have appeared to better advantage at the head of a more favorable school.

WINTER TERM.

Same Teacher as during the summer term. Length of School, five months; wages of Teacher, per month, \$18; amount received as pay, \$90; average attendance of Scholars, 44 6-10; whole number, 62; number of Scholars under five years of age, 2; number over fifteen years of age, 2.

The Teacher labored hard to make the School what it ought to be, but her efforts were not encouraged by the parents of the children ; this fact, together with the very irregular attendance, and, it may be, some errors in point of discipline, will account for the partial failure which attended this School the present term. The Committee are of the opinion that a male teacher should be engaged to teach this School during the winter, one who is a mild, yet firm, and strict disciplinarian.

DISTRICT, No. 7.—SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee,—Nathaniel Dunbar.

Teacher,—Miss Maria Mann.

Length of School, three months and one week ; wages of Teacher, per month, \$20 ; amount received by the Teacher as pay, \$65 ; average attendance of Scholars, 43 ; whole number, 51 ; number of Scholars under five years of age, 4 ; number over fifteen years of age, none.

This School made rapid and thorough progress. Miss Mann was indefatigable in her labors to revolutionize the government of the School—a thing very much needed—and she succeeded in her efforts to a great degree. But there was one unfortunate defect in the Teacher's deportment towards her scholars ; she seemed to be ignorant of the power of kindness, or at least to think that the school-room was no place to exercise it. This spirit of unkindness becoming too manifest, there was a general feeling of opposition aroused against her in the District ; becoming acquainted with this fact, Miss M. left the School in the middle of the term.

FALL TERM.

Teacher,—Miss Elsie Davis.

Length of School, two months ; wages of Teacher, per month, \$20 ; amount received by the Teacher as pay, \$40 ; average attendance of Scholars, 46 ; whole number, 53 ; number of Scholars under five years of age, 3 ; number over fifteen years of age, 1.

This term being a very short one, the Committee are prepared to say but little concerning it. Harmony was restored between Teacher and pupils ; and considering the shortness of term, very good progress was made by the scholars, especially in reading. Miss Davis did not take charge of the school with a view of remaining with it any length of time, but only until the expiration of the Fall Term.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher,—Mr. Stillman Holmes.

Length of School, four months; wages of Teacher, per month, \$38; amount received by the Teacher as pay, \$152; average attendance of Scholars, 39 23-40; whole number, 53; number of Scholars under five years of age, 1; number over fifteen years of age, 1.

Mr. H. seemed very desirous of bringing his scholars under the influence of a wholesome and efficient discipline, in this he but partially succeeded. The Committee are of the opinion that his endeavors were not seconded by others connected with the school. Mr. Holmes, however, seemed to lack that peculiar energy necessary to sustain a teacher who is desirous of effecting radical changes in a school.

GENERAL REMARKS.

It is a source of regret, to Teachers and Committees, that the parents and guardians of Scholars do not, generally, exhibit that degree of interest which they should, and which they would if they fully realized their duties in this respect. Parents should visit Schools, not only at their close, but also during the term.

The Committee have insisted much upon the Teachers explaining, in as clear a manner as possible, the elementary principles of the different branches of study pursued in the Common Schools. It is useless for scholars to be permitted to glide over a study, without mastering its first principles; indeed, we may say, it is *worse* than useless, for children thereby form habits of treating subjects in a superficial way, which will be of serious injury to them. And this leads the Committee to say, that they have labored to impress upon the minds of Teachers the fact, that children are forming habits, while at school, which will, to a greater or less degree, cling to them through life. It is hardly possible to over estimate the importance of strictly attending to the habits of children; if they are permitted to do every thing in a loose and imperfect manner, the consequence will be, as a general rule, that these same habits will characterize the whole conduct and business of life: teachers, therefore, should not overlook this important fact, but in everything have the future as well as the present good of the scholars in view.

In most instances where Teachers have not succeeded so well as the Committee had a right to expect, the attendance

has been very irregular. It is utterly impossible for a school to make rapid improvements, if the scholars are not regular in attendance ; the irregular ones, of course, retrograde, but the evil does not stop at this, others in the same class with them are retarded in their progress by their backwardness. So great is this evil, that irregular scholars should not be permitted to remain in the same class with those who are regular. Parents do not always make that allowance for irregularity when judging of the progress of a school that they should ; indeed no one but a Teacher can fully realize the extent of the mischief occasioned by this very evil. The Committee are anxious that parents should take this matter into serious consideration.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

C. CRAVENS,
EZEKIEL CAPEN,
Committee.

Read, accepted, and ordered to be printed under the direction of the Committee.

Attest :

WILLIAM HORTON, *Town Clerk.*